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Black, Catriona; The Herald, 21 June 2010

Torsten Lauschmann, Collective, Edinburgh

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Glasgow-based artist's Patchwork Cinema show spill over to the EIFF.

There are artists who work with new media, and artists who set themselves in opposition to it; then there is Torsten Lauschmann. The Glasgow artist is at once a techno-geek and a Luddite, and somehow in him, the two sit naturally together. This is the man who was responsible for World Jump Day, an internet hoax which achieved a huge following five years ago. This is the man who, under the name Slender Whiteman, busks around Europe with his solar-powered laptop.

Lauschmann, though born in Germany, has made Glasgow his home. Trained in photography at Glasgow School of Art, he has become a leading figure in the city's close-knit art scene over the last 17 years. His work, though it often samples itself, encompasses a bewildering range of media from sculpture to software programming.

It's unsurprising, therefore, that Lauschmann's latest venture straddles two artforms; an exhibition centred on a screening at the Collective gallery, and a performance at the Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF), with a residence at said festival which will no doubt feed his vampiric appetite for archive material.

It's hard to know what to expect of Sideshow, Lauschmann's "one-off performance/screening event" at the EIFF on Thursday (Filmhouse, 8.30pm), as it promises technological trickery but at the same time refers back to the early days of cinema, when the viewing experience was not yet restrained by convention.

The artist pays homage to that time in the gallery too, where an improvised cinema-space resembles a nomad's tent, furnished with chairs most likely borrowed from student flats and gardens. The walls are hung with ruffled curtains, tacked together from scraps of thrift-shop fabric. The projector teeters on a stack of folding wooden chairs, while crude stacks of home speakers huddle on either side of the white sheet screen.

The Patchwork Cinema is comfortable and welcoming, and like all of Lauschmann's work, it's very human. Children's chairs occupy the front row, and one is encouraged to leave one's phone on. The programme itself is a 42-minute patchwork of experimental films from the early days of cinema and of video art. Breathtaking sequences reveal a wealth of invention and playfulness, as new tricks were played and techniques discovered.

A few of the films were hand coloured, leaving Aladdin's pantaloons bubbling with scarlet fury in 1906. Hands themselves feature widely, as in Émile Cohl's *Fantasmagorie* of 1908 where the animator's hands pop in to fix up an injured character. These echo Lauschmann's own work projected just outside the room, a "digital" clock whose digits are reshaped every second by the artist's hands.

Lauschmann can take any labour-saving device and make it labour-intensive again. He can take bland technology and make it pleasingly couthy. Whether he's sewing curtains or writing open-source software, he can make you want to be part of it too. Patchwork Cinema is a celebration of old new technologies which is a joy to be in, and for anyone even remotely interested in film, it's not to be missed.

Until July 18